

Equity and
Excellence in
Education

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Honorable Senator Carl Levin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senator Levin,

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

On behalf of Community Telecommunications Network (CTN) of which Oakland Schools is a partner, we write to you about an issue of importance to our state: the ITFS (Instructional Television Fixed Services) spectrum. Specifically, we ask you to **support the educators in your state** as the Federal Communications Commission considers reallocating portions of the digital spectrum to accommodate wireless cellular phone providers.

ITFS is a distance learning technology that has provided teacher training and classroom instruction to millions of students across the United States for more than 35 years. ITFS licensees serve thousands of public and parochial schools, colleges, and universities, providing greater access to professional development, more efficient delivery of curriculum, and various other educational opportunities. In our community the ITFS spectrum is being used to provide critical instructional resources and professional development – both inservice and preservice- training – to educators in the region.

Additionally, **ITFS networks are a bridge across the digital divide.** ITFS licensees—in conjunction with their commercial partners—are upgrading their systems to provide two-way, high speed broadband Internet and video access to educational institutions, homes, and small businesses. This development promises **affordable high-speed access for thousands of underserved communities, including those bypassed by DSL and cable modem service, across the United States.**

These benefits notwithstanding, the future of ITFS has been called into doubt. Third generation cell phone service (also known as 3G) providers want additional spectrum for new mobile phone services. The ITFS spectrum has been targeted as a possible choice, with third generation (3G) cell phone service providers formally petitioning the FCC to relocate ITFS licensees in order to accommodate them.

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In an attempt to address this controversy, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") began a proceeding in early January to determine whether the ITFS spectrum should be reallocated in whole or in part to 3G services. Educators have been actively participating in this proceeding, letting the FCC know that the ITFS spectrum is a **valuable educational asset** that must be preserved and expanded to serve the needs of twenty-first century learning.

On March 30, 2001, the FCC issued a Report on Instructional Fixed Television Services, which supports many the arguments made by educational institutions. Specifically, the FCC noted that spectrum reallocation in the ITFS band would disrupt distance learning services, be extremely difficult if not impossible from a technical perspective, and carry heavy financial costs for the educational institutions involved. Finally, the report suggested that **relocation, by slowing ITFS deployment of broadband services, would hamper existing efforts to extend digital opportunity.**

Given the demonstrated benefit of ITFS and the FCC's findings, we urge you to stand up for students and teachers in your state and directly urge the FCC not to relocate any part of the ITFS spectrum. We at CTN hope that you will support us in our ongoing educational mission by maintaining the integrity of our spectrum. If you would like additional information about ITFS or have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Patrick Gossman, Executive Director, CTN at 313.577.2085 or Email: pgossman@wayne.edu

Sincerely,



Dr. Janet M. Van Dam, Director
New Media